

## Carilion Clinics' Path to Sustainability

### Developing an Environmental Stewardship Council and Sustainability Champion Committee

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#### Overview

*Carilion Clinic recognizes that the health of the environment is directly related to the health of communities. Carilion's Environmental Stewardship Council is committed to pursuing a culture of environmental stewardship and sustainability for patients, employees and communities; and they acknowledge that minimizing their impact on the environment is implicit in their mission, vision and values.*

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#### What is the makeup of the Environmental Stewardship Council?

Over 20 senior and executive leaders from various departments across seven hospitals meet biannually.

#### How are Council members engaged in the process?

They are responsible for creating a clear vision of what Carilion Clinic is trying to accomplish as an organization at the system and facility levels.

#### What is the makeup of the Sustainability Champion Committee?

Over 100 Sustainability Champions from various departments across seven hospitals meet every other month as part of the Committee. The team is made up of employees from entry-level to manager-level.

#### How are Committee members engaged in the process?

They are responsible for implementing Carilion's day-to-day sustainability programs. Sustainability Champions and subcommittees work with Carilion's Sustainability Coordinator and Manager to develop and implement initiatives.

#### What are the benefits?

- Creating a culture of community health and wellness: Carilion sponsored a Bike Share program as well as worked to fund and build an Urban Farm based on the needs of the community. The Urban Farm offers free produce to anyone who tends the garden or attends an on-site health education event. Unused produce is sold through the LEAP Mobile Market, which brings healthy, local and fresh food to Roanoke neighborhoods and to other local farmers markets.
- Supporting the community: Dining Services increased purchasing of local food from farmers and vendors.
- Recognition In 2019:
  - Carilion Clinic received the Gold Governor's Environmental Excellence Award in 2019 for their Efficiency and Sustainability Program.
  - Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital and Carilion New River Valley Medical Center received the Practice Greenhealth Partner for Change Award.
  - Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital received the "Take Charge Energy Efficiency Award" from Appalachian Power.
  - Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital won the Gold level award for Environmental Excellence with the Virginia Water Environment Association.

**What is the environmental impact?**

- Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital achieved a 16.72 percent recycling rate, which increased from 15 percent in 2017 and 13 percent in 2016. Carilion New River Valley Medical Center achieved a 20.45 percent recycling rate.
- With the installation of a new tunnel washer, designed to handle heavy loads of laundry, Carilion Linen Services decreased water use by 35,000 gallons per day in 2019. With increased press capacity and decreased drying times, this equipment upgrade reduced electricity and natural gas use.
- At Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital, Dining and Nutrition Services started focusing on food waste from patient meals by removing milk and salads as items that are automatically served and instead provide them upon request. This diverted 10,000 pounds of food waste from the landfill and reduced costs for Carilion.

**What are the best practices?**

- Form a team with members from different parts of your organization to get a variety of ideas.
- Challenge all employees to look for ways to address environmental issues and simple ways to be more efficient.
- Communicate results and successes to keep employees engaged in the program.
- Develop and maintain partnerships and relationships throughout the organization and throughout the community.

**What are some programs that Carilion Clinic has implemented?**

Carilion has various programs within sustainability, improving air and water quality, and reducing waste. In addition to recycling, Carilion diverts materials from the landfill through the Mission Donation Program. Over 107,931 pounds of unused, unopened, unexpired surplus medical supplies were collected and donated all over the world, saving thousands in avoided waste disposal fees. Carilion New River Valley Hospital has a Solar Tracking Field with 4,000 panels over 5 acres that generates 17 percent of Carilion's annual energy needs. These panels offset 3.2 million pounds of carbon dioxide annually. In addition to increasing renewable energy, Carilion Franklin Memorial Hospital has saved 15,621 gallons of fuel oil (enough to heat 31 homes for a year according to Davenport Energy) in the last five years just by prioritizing energy efficiency.



Carilion Clinic Earth Day Celebration Activities

### **How does continuous improvement play a role?**

Key stakeholders are engaged in the Environmental Oversight Committee. This group has the authority to approve high-level initiatives and allocate funds. The Environmental Mission Statement makes a commitment to providing ongoing attention to their clinical, operational and financial actions and decisions through continuous assessment of resource management and implementation of sustainability practices.

### **How can other facilities implement an Environmental Stewardship Council?**

Carilion developed their Efficiency and Sustainability Program using the frameworks provided by Practice Greenhealth. Having engaged leadership is essential in implementing Sustainability with an organization. The [Leadership Engagement: How to Guide](#) was used to develop the Environmental Stewardship Oversight Committee. Carilion also developed their Sustainability Champion committee using Practice Greenhealth's Framework [A Guide for Creating Effective Green Teams in Health Care](#).